

An End, a Beginning

The death of a newspaper is always saddening. To the men and women who have thrown their lives into the production of it, to the readers who have followed it faithfully over the years, to other newspapermen, a newspaper is not just bricks and mortar but an ink-stained place of tears and laughter, with a spirit and personality of its own.

Yesterday, for the last time, the presses of the Washington Daily News ground to a halt. They were stilled after 50 years of publication not through any lack of skill or energy on the part of the News' employees or by a deficiency in the paper's editorial product. The News always was lively and hard-hitting. But in the end the combination of rising production costs, competition in the evening field and television pressure proved too much for the News, which had been faced with "substantial and increasing loss for more than five years."

This is a nationwide trend: Until yesterday, Washington and New York were the only American cities with more than two separately owned newspapers published daily. The Star itself has not been immune to similar pressures and indeed has suffered losses over the past two years. If there was to be a strong, independent and economically viable evening newspaper in Washington, to compete successfully with the Post's monopoly in the morning field, either the Star or the News had to shut down.

But while the News' demise is no occasion for jubilation on anyone's part, it marks not only the end of an era but the

birth of a new one. For in a very real sense, the spirit of the News will live on in a new, larger and brighter "Evening Star and Washington Daily News," a first-day edition of which you are now reading. Daily News readers—more than 200,000 of them—will find many of their favorite News features and by-lines appearing in the combined paper, which also will carry reports from the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance.

We hope and believe that our own regular readers will find the new combined product, wholly owned by ourselves, to be the best paper we have published in the 120 years The Star has served this city and surrounding areas of Maryland and Virginia. The Star has a great tradition and we are proud of it. But we look not to the past but to the future, and each of us here is intent upon making "The Evening Star and Washington Daily News" the even greater newspaper which the Nation's Capital deserves.

So while we mourn the passing of the old, we welcome the challenge and opportunity of competing on a more equal basis with the Post, which itself purchased the old Times-Herald in 1954. We wish good luck to News employees who are going elsewhere, we welcome aboard those who will be joining us and we send special greetings to our new readers. To one and all we make a single promise: We are going to draw upon the traditions and strengths of both the Star and the News to produce the best newspaper of which we are capable.